

AI-Native Teams Need Product Judgment at Engineering Speed

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AI is widening the gap between build throughput and PM judgment. This brief translates the shift into gated discovery, data-aware agent strategy, behavior-led experimentation, and practical career and tooling moves.

Big Ideas

AI-native teams need product judgment at engineering speed. Oji Udezue describes engineers adopting AI and moving roughly $10\times$ faster while PMs continue discovery and strategy at the old pace, leaving product as the bottleneck. [1] His ProductMind system addresses the layers often missed by engineering-focused AI tooling: 17 skills cover business and product work such as finding problems, deciding what to build, creating value, monetization, direction, and execution. [2] The important design choice is the use of gates: because LLMs rarely say no, a skill can stop the next step and replicate a piece of PM judgment rather than merely asking a PM to edit the output afterward. [2]

Agent value is moving toward data-rich workflow platforms. Aaron Levie argues that if agents generate $100\times$ more code, process large datasets, and make decisions across systems, the platforms managing that data and work become more important—not less; governance, security, compliance, guardrails, and safe data access are part of the product. [3] Scott Belsky makes the related case that a “teamwork graph” improves the efficiency and accuracy of both work and agent actions, while Hiten Shah reduces the strategy question to who controls the data. [4, 5] For PMs, model choice is only one part of the roadmap: define the context, permissions, workflow state, and control surface the agent can safely use.

Tactical Playbook

Put a no-build gate in front of AI-generated features. ProductMind’s Sharp Problem Test asks:

1. What do people do today? An easy workaround means there may be no problem.
2. How many people have it, and how often? Daily use can outweigh a market ten times larger with monthly use.
3. Will anyone pay? Check what they already spend on the workaround.

Fail one question and kill the idea; require a $3\times$ improvement over the current alternative before expecting switching. [2] The associated 11-step scaffold deliberately keeps its first four steps away from code and produces research and product artifacts before implementation. [2]

For B2B discovery, convert interest into a small commitment immediately: when real pain surfaces, ask on the first call whether the prospect will review rough versions. Then ask who can grant access to the relevant ticketing systems or logs; “I’d have to ask” is research about the buying path, not pilot readiness. [6, 7]

Case Studies & Lessons

The Savannah Bananas turned observation into the roadmap. The team videotaped fans and saw them leaving early; the evidence suggested the three- to four-hour game was too slow, so the plan changed from being a conventional baseball team to creating a faster show. Jesse Cole’s advice is behavioral rather than survey-led: put ideas into the world and watch what fans do. [8] The team then tested “banana ball” behind closed doors—nine innings in 99 minutes—accepted that the first version was chaos, and expanded only after fans stayed more than an hour after a show. [8]

The business model reinforced the product test: sell tickets rather than depend on sponsors, progressing from two tickets in the first three months to 4,000-seat sellouts. [8] They still price tickets at \$40–\$60 with no fees and run a face-value resale market, despite secondary-market prices above \$200, prioritizing fan trust over immediately extractable revenue. [8] The PM pattern is clear: observe behavior, prototype narrowly, set a behavioral threshold, then scale—and treat pricing as part of the product promise.

Career Corner

Make judgment visible in senior interviews. Shreyas Doshi says interviewers can learn a lot from the questions candidates ask and points to the subtle cues hiring managers often miss. [9] Prepare questions about decision context, constraints, trade-offs, and what has failed; the question phase should show how you reason, not only what role you want.

Tools & Resources

- **Agent Plugins:** OpenAI and partners introduced an open format that packages Agent Skills and MCP server configurations so one plugin can work across compatible agent clients. Treat portability as a product requirement for internal agent capabilities. [10]
 - **PM AI workshops:** Lenny Rachitsky's Head of Education is running free workshops with Cursor, Replit, PostHog, and Supabase on using popular AI tools in day-to-day PM work; registration is available through the linked course page. [11]
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Sources

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